

REMARKS

Claims 7, 8, 18-22, 52-54, and 56-61 are presently pending in this application. Claims 22 and 54 have been amended. Claims 1-6, 9-17, 23-51, and 55 were previously canceled. The status of the application in light of the November 21, 2006, Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 7, 18, 20, 21, 52, 53, 56, 58, 60, and 61 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,782,675 to Southwick ("Southwick");

(B) Claims 8 and 19 were indicated to be allowable; and

(C) Claims 22, 54, 57, and 59 were objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

As a preliminary matter, the undersigned would like to thank the Examiner for participating in a telephone interview on March 13, 2007. During the interview, the parties discussed the Southwick reference. Although no agreement was reached, the Examiner indicated that the arguments presented by the undersigned attorney deserve further consideration. This paper constitutes the applicant's summary of this interview. If the Examiner notes any deficiencies with regard to this summary, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney.

A. Response to the Section 102(b) Rejection under Southwick

The discussion of Southwick herein addresses the relevant embodiments disclosed in the specification and figures of Southwick, and in no way is a characterization or interpretation of the claims in Southwick. The claims in Southwick, moreover, are expressly not limited to the embodiments disclosed in the specification of Southwick. Therefore, the claims in Southwick are to be interpreted without reference to this paper.

(1) Claim 7 is Directed Toward a Planarizing Machine With a Support Extending Over a Pad that Carries a Movable Fluid Discharge Unit.

Claim 7 is directed toward a planarizing machine that includes a table having a support surface, a processing pad on the support surface, a carrier assembly having a head configured to hold a microelectronic workpiece, and a drive assembly carrying the head relative to the support surface. The machine further includes a solution dispenser separate from the head. The solution dispenser is configured to discharge a planarizing solution onto a plurality of locations on the pad. The solution dispenser includes an elongated support extending over the pad at a location spaced apart from a travel path of the head, a fluid passageway carried by the support through which a planarizing solution can flow, and a fluid discharge unit slidably carried by the support and in fluid communication with the fluid passageway. The fluid discharge unit is moveable along the support to discharge a flow of the planarizing solution onto separate areas of the processing pad during a planarizing cycle.

(2) Claim 7 is Patentable for At Least the Reason That it is a Planarizing Machine With a Support Extending Over a Pad that Carries a Movable Fluid Discharge Unit.

Claim 7 is patentable for at least the reason that it includes a planarizing machine with a fluid discharge unit slidably carried by a support extending over a processing pad. Additionally, in claim 7 the fluid discharge unit that is movable along the support to discharge a flow of planarizing solution onto separate areas of the processing pad during a planarizing process. Southwick does not teach or suggest a planarizing machine with a support above a processing pad and a fluid discharge unit movably coupled to the support.

Furthermore, a person skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify the CMP machine of Southwick to include a movable planarizing solution dispenser because movement of the planarizing solution dispenser may require changes in the conditioning requirements of the planarizing surface. Such changes in the conditioning requirements of the planarizing surface could require adjustments to the pad refurbishing apparatus in order to achieve desired conditioning results. This could result in a complicated process, and there is no reason to further complicate the conditioning and planarizing relationship.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

EXPEDITED PROCEDURE – Art Unit 3723

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Therefore, for at least this reason, claim 7 is in condition for allowance. Claim 56 depends from claim 7, and for at least this reason claim 7 is also in condition for allowance. Independent claims 18, 20, and 52 include features, *inter alia*, similar to those of claim 7. For at least this reason, claims 18, 20, and 52 are in condition for allowance. Claim 58 depends from claim 18, claims 21 and 60 depend from claim 20, and claims 53 and 61 depends from claim 52. For at least this reason, these claims are also in condition for allowance.

B. Indication of Allowable Subject Matter

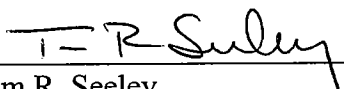
The undersigned attorney would like to thank the Examiner for allowing independent claims 8 and 19 and for indicating that claims 22, 54, 57, and 59 contain allowable subject matter. Because claims 57 and 59 depend from allowed claims 8 and 19, claims 57 and 59 are allowable without being rewritten in independent form. Claims 22 and 54 have rewritten in independent form to include the features of the claims from which they depend. Accordingly, amended claims 22 and 54 are also in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the applied art. The Applicants accordingly request reconsideration of the application and a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Tim Seeley at (206) 359-6477.

Respectfully submitted,

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